DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 110 899 CG 010 026

AUTHOR Beeler, Kent D.
TITLE Mini-U: A Novel Approach to Professional Staff Development in Student Affairs.
INSTITUTION Eastern Michigan Univ., Ypsilanti. Div. of Student Affairs.
PUB DATE Mar 75
NOTE 6p.

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.76 HC-$1.58 Plus Postage
DESCRIPTORS *Course Descriptions; Higher Education; *Inservice Education; *Inservice Programs; *Professional Education; Program Descriptions; Staff Improvement; *Student Personnel Workers
IDENTIFIERS Eastern Michigan University; *Mini University

ABSTRACT

This brochure describes the novel professional staff development model used by the Division of Student Affairs (DSA) at Eastern Michigan University. The inservice training model revolved around the design and implementation of a Mini-University format for the 76 staff professionals and six graduate assistants within the DSA. Basically, the "Mini-U" consists of a combination of the concepts of the Free University model and a mini-course, in that it consists of an effort to accomplish rather specific instructional objectives with a small group of learners in a brief time period. Eleven non-tuition Mini-U courses were generated in the early fall, seven of which met minimum enrollment requirements. Course descriptions and implementation efforts are included in this brochure. (Author/HMV)

**********
* Documents acquired by ERIC include many informal unpublished *
* materials not available from other sources. ERIC makes every effort *
* to obtain the best copy available. nevertheless, items of marginal *
* reproducibility are often encountered and this affects the quality *
* of the microfiche and hardcopy reproductions ERIC makes available *
* via the ERIC Document Reproduction Service (EDRS). EDRS is not *
* responsible for the quality of the original document. Reproductions *
* supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made from the original. *
**********

ED110892

# MINI-U

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

EASTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY

PSD Professional Staff Development

DSA Division of Student Affairs

## Mini-U: A Novel Approach to Professional Staff Development in Student Affairs

*Kent D. Beeler*
*Director of Professional Staff Development*

### Introduction

*What is staff development?*

While staff development connotes different things to different people, it generally refers to an in-service, continuing education, or staff training format designed to enhance the competencies, skills, and knowledge of individuals so they can provide better services to their clientele. Within higher education the concept of staff development has largely been treated as a professional stepchild and there have been a limited number of successful and sustained programs.

*Why staff development in the first place?*

Perhaps the most obvious point is that continuous upgrading of staff has traditionally been an expectation for all professions. An added condition is that, today, many institutions of higher learning are faced with financial exigencies and this has prompted a call for accountability of both programs and personnel. The profession of student personnel work is likewise being asked to justify its contributions and staff positions.

Yet, the need for a highly qualified and competent professional staff within the student affairs area has never been more important as the field subdivides into specialities and adds new ones such as minority affairs, career exploration and planning, and legal and judicial services. Another factor is that the currently depressed job market has slowed considerably the influx of new professionals into the student personnel field. Normally, new staff members are looked to as a source of valuable ideas and fresh insights, for new information on emerging issues and trends, and as adding professional enthusiasm and vigor. Establishing or expanding in-service programs for present staff members can help offset this professional loss.

It is an established fact that the better and more progressive organizations have viable and ongoing staff development programs. Divisions of student affairs have generally not established on-campus training vehicles for their personnel. However, this component of the university has likely been the most active in conducting in-service education when compared to academic, business, and public affairs units.

A national study of staff development activities in student affairs programs, sponsored by the American College Personnel Association and reported by Miller (1975), pointed out that "only one of every five institutions has formalized a policy statement concerning in-service education staff development programming." Much of the in-service activity for student personnel workers occurs off-campus in the form of local, state, and national professional association conventions, conferences, and workshops. This type of continuing education also receives the greatest amount of financial support. On-campus in-service education receives just one-tenth of the total staff development budget.

### Review of Recent Literature

Little literature or research has been published in the area of in-service education which portrays post-employment staff development of student personnel workers on a division-wide basis. Most of the writing deals with specific staffs such as residence halls, academic advising, and paraprofessionals. Another part of the literature focuses on the selection, preparation, training, and education of counselors and college student personnel workers.

The 1973-74 ACPA national survey was conducted partially in response to the lack of applicable research dealing with staff training in student affairs programs and generated much needed data about the current level of this activity. Meyerson (1974 a, 1974b) profiled how the division of student affairs at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln planned and implemented an innovative staff development format on its campus.

Stamatakos and Oliaro (1972) take the position that in-service development is an intricate function of student personnel and should be built in as a basic job expectation. Passons (1969) reported a pilot project of four 90-minute training sessions on empathic understanding of counseling that was provided for the student affairs staff of the University of Pennsylvania.

Truitt and Gross (1966) prepared *Inservice Education for College Student Personnel* as a special bulletin for the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators and provided some principles and guidelines for professional development. A doctoral dissertation by Gross (1963) dealt with in-service education programs for student personnel workers at selected U.S. institutions.

It would appear that the identification and compilation of innovative and creative division-wide staff development models and exemplary programs would be a major contribution to the field and to the literature. Described here is a case study about the novel professional staff development model used by the Division of Student Affairs at Eastern Michigan University during the 1974-74 academic year.

CS 010 076

## EASTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY
## A CASE STUDY

*The Mini-U Proposal*

During the past several years at Eastern Michigan University, the Division of Student Affairs (DSA) used monthly all-staff meetings as its professional staff development (PSD) format. Featured at most of these three-four a semester meetings were panelists, resource persons, and guest speakers from the university community. A PSD committee, comprised of six regular full-time professionals and a chairperson, was charged with the responsibility for the in-service programming. Generally, the monthly staff meeting format was well received and served its purpose well. But it was beginning to outlive its usefulness, and the desirability for a new approach to staff development was becoming apparent.

In the late spring of 1974, a proposal to serve as the director of PSD for the Division was made by a faculty member who teaches graduate-level college student personnel courses in the department of guidance and counseling. The plan called for creating an adjunct administrator position – the Directorship of PSD – within the DSA for the 1974-75 academic year. The salary for the one-fourth time position was to be provided within the budget of the vice-president for student affairs. An additional budget figure of about $375, to cover the cost of implementing and operating the proposal, was subsequently submitted and approved.

The in-service training proposal revolved aroung the design and implementation of a Mini-University format for the 76 staff professionals and six graduate assistants within the DSA. Basically, the "Mini-U" consists of the combination of the concept of the Free University model that was a product of the mid-1960's, and the concept of a mini-course which consists of an effort to accomplish rather specific instructional objectives with a small group of learners in a brief time period.

The proposal for the directorship position and the planned in-service model received the endorsement of the seven department heads within the Division, the vice-president for student affairs, and the university president. The concept of the position and training format had been presented earlier and had received the support of the PSD committee.

*Objectives of the Mini-U*

The overriding objectives of PSD for the Division were based on the premise that "student personnel workers are professionally interdependent. It is our belief that continuing staff development contributes significantly to meeting the overall mission of providing an effective delivery system for student services/programs on our campus." The three major objectives established for the Mini-U were: (1) to provide staff with the opportunity to enhance, refresh, and learn skills and techniques useable in daily student personnel work, (2) to provide staff with the opportunity to study and examine timely issues, trends, and concerns in student personnel work specifically and in higher education generally and, (3) to provide staff with the opportunity to interact with fellow professionals from other student personnel offices and with personalities within the university-community. More specifically, the three Mini-U objectives can be cited as providing skill training, expanding professional information, and facilitating additional colleague interaction.

*Introducing the Mini-U*

The director met with the PSD committee in early September to exchange information and views regarding the Mini-U and to plan the divisional staff meetings. A close relationship was built between the director, an ex-officio member, and the committee members. During the fall semester the group held five meetings.

In late September the first all-DSA meeting was held and the Mini-U was introduced as the new PSD format for the academic year. Active input and involvement of the staff professionals were requested and "Some Helpful Things to Know about the Mini-U" was circulated at the session. This four-page mimeo provided answers to these twelve questions: What is a Mini-U? What is a Mini-U course? What are some Mini-U course subjects? What will be the focus of Mini-U courses? Who designs and teaches Mini-U courses? Who will enroll in Mini-U courses? What time period is involved in a Mini-U course? When will Mini-U courses be held? How will Mini-U courses be evaluated? How do I register for a Mini-U course? What are Continuing Education Units (CEU's)? What if I need additional information about the Mini-U?

Three major practical advantages of the new PSD format were advanced to the group: (1) Staff would be actively involved in identifying areas where they could gain or share expertise and skills, (2) Individual staff clock-time involved would be less than the previously held all-DSA monthly meetings and, (3) Staff would have an opportunity to earn partial Continuing Education Units (CEU's). CEU's are recorded for the satisfactory completion of specially designated non-credit courses and are computed on the basis of one unit for every 10 contact hours, recorded to one decimal point. The intention of CEU's is to provide employers and colleges with a concise way of measuring and recording participation in seminars, short courses, and other adult programs. These activities are to be part of an organized continuing education experience under responsible sponsorship, capable direction and qualified instruction (1974). The built-in advantages of expanded colleague interaction and personal and professional growth for staff members were also cited by the director.

Copies of the Mini-U course proposal outline form (containing points to consider) were made available and a portion of the meeting was reserved for brainstorming and sketching of potential Mini-U courses. An expectation was built that all staff members in the Division would participate in the Mini-U either as a learner or instructor.

Additional support for staff participation in the Mini-U was sought when the director met with the department heads. Each department was also encouraged to design a Mini-U course which it believed would be of interest and value to other staff members across the campus. A presentation was also made at the staff meeting of the residence hall personnel – the largest group of professionals in the division. Relevant news items were also placed in the *Commentator*, the bi-weekly newsletter of the Division

*Fall Semester Mini-U Report*

Eleven non-tuition Mini-U courses were generated during the ten-day period that followed the September all-Division staff meeting. The PSD committee and the director met to review the course proposals. A course description booklet and simple registration form were prepared and circulated by campus mail to all eligible staff professionals. The description for each course included the course number, instructor(s), dates and times, location, minimum and maximum enrollment, course activities, partial CEU's earned, and explanatory notes where needed. Six of the eleven courses proposed included team-teaching or resource people. A Mini-U course was available every weekday with most sessions being scheduled just before lunch or at the last part of the workday. All but one course was to be held on campus. A one-week registration period was held for the Mini-U and participants identified the course(s) they were most interested in. An alternate course was also to be listed. Course confirmation notices were sent later to enrollees.

Seven Mini-U courses met the set enrollment minimums. Available courses involved independent study, two skill development sessions, and four classes that met in one to two hour blocks over a three-four week span. Partial CEU's ranged from .4 to .8. Course enrollment ranged from 2 to 14. Instructors were two faculty members, two campus administrators, three graduate students in guidance and counseling, and two student personnel staff members.

Mini-U courses offered:

01 Profile of ( ) College Students
02 Everybody Has Equal Opportunity Rights
03 Your Leadership Style: Concern for Task? Concern for People?
06 Can You Hear Me? Developing Effective Listening Skills
08 Legal Rights of Students in Higher Education
10 Ethics, Religion and the University
11 Basic Human Interaction in Education

The fall semester calendar for the Mini-U covered the last two weeks in October and the first two weeks in November.

Mini-U courses not offered:

04 What You've Always Wanted to Know About Residence Halls . . . But Were Afraid to Ask!
05 Foreign Students: Their Expectations, Trials and Tribulations
07 Transcendental Meditation (TM): An Introduction
09 Student Records and The Privacy Act of 1974

Registration requests for the eleven proposed Mini-U courses totaled 62. Enrollees in the seven courses offered during the fall semester numbered 50. Thirteen students emphasizing college student personnel work in their graduate programs were part of that total. Eleven enrollees – eight staff professionals, one graduate assistant, and two students – registered for two courses. Fifty staff members were involved as either learners or instructors in Mini-U courses actually offered. Two staffers were involved in both activities.

Two DSA departments did not participate and this lowered the percentage of staff involvement. The staff of the Health Service was faced with not having substitutes available who could readily cover their positions while they attended Mini-U courses. The staff of the Admissions and Financial Aids office asked to be exempted due to their fall semester off-campus visitation schedule, and from being short three staff members. The Health Service and Admissions-Financial Aids staffs, however, did involve themselves in the winter semester Mini-U. Together these two departments accounted for over a fourth of the regular staff in the Division.

*December All-DSA Staff Meeting*

News related to PSD meetings and the Mini-U was circulated by placing items in the *Commentator* and by sending out "please post" announcements to department heads. An effective method of communication was the "handcarrying" of materials to the various student personnel offices. This provided an opportunity for the PSD director to have several informal chats with fellow professionals in their settings.

In early December an all-DSA end of semester meeting was held. Included as part of the afternoon session was the awarding of printed Mini-U certificates to both course enrollees and instructors. Also recognized were fourteen individuals, nominated by their professional peers, who had provided outstanding contributions to the department, division, university, profession and/or the local community. A short narration about the service rendered by each awardee was provided.

A brief Mini-U evaluation report was made by the director based on the anonymous course feedback sheets returned by the enrollees. Course instructors later received the evaluation forms. The newly elected chairperson of the PSD committee commented on some of the future directions the group was exploring. After the meeting, a "dutch treat" party was held at a local pizzeria with spouses and friends of staff members as invited guests.

*Winter Semester Mini-U Report*

The second semester of PSD activities began with the January all-DSA meeting which included a welcome by the new university president and featured Dr. Theodore K. Miller, President-elect of the American College Personnel Association. Dr. Miller's speech-illustrated slide presentation on Phase II of the ACPA's Tomorrow's Higher Education project provided considerable stimulus for the general audience. A student personnel educator, the president of the student body, a graduate assistant, and the dean of students served as panel reactors. Copies of the Phase II statement had been circulated previously to the total staff. Descriptive literature and membership forms of state and national professional associations in the field of student personnel work were make available for interested staff members.

A call for Mini-U course proposals for the winter semester was issued at the meeting and "please post" bulletin information regarding the Mini-U was sent later to department offices. Twelve proposals were received at the end of the two-week course development period. A course description booklet and registration form were mailed to all staff personnel. A one-week course registration period was held with course confirmations sent out at the close of that time.

Seven of the twelve Mini-U courses proposed attracted the needed number of registrants. One of the two courses repeated the winter semester reached its enrollment minimum. One other course failed for the second time to attract sufficient registrants. All but four of the proposed courses involved team-teaching or the use of resource people. At least one Mini-U course was available each weekday generally in late afternoons. One class was scheduled for a Saturday morning. Formats for the Mini-U courses eventually offered included three skill development workshops, a field trip, and three lecture-discussion classes. Partial CEU's ranged from .2 to .8. Course enrollments ranged from 8 to 20.

Instructors included two faculty members, two campus administrators, one graduate assistant in the department of guidance and counseling, and four student personnel staff members. Three officials from two other colleges were involved in the field trip, the only course that met off campus.

Mini-U courses offered:

15 Uniform Compensation System
16 Offensive-Defensive Communication Patterns
17 Change Agentry Workshop
19 Basic Human Interaction in Education
20 Continuing Seminar on Student Related Health Topics
21 A Visit to See What Your Neighbors at UM-Dearborn and Henry Ford Community College Are Doing In. . .
23 Vocational Group Counseling: B.S. at its Best

The winter semester Mini-U calendar covered the last two weeks in February and the first two weeks in March. One exception was the continuing seminar for Health Service personnel which met at the end of each month during the semester.

Mini-U courses not offered:

12 EMU Minority Organizations: Description & Goals
13 Everybody Has Equal Opportunity Rights
14 Student Records and The Privacy Act of 1974
18 It's More than a Joke: Student Samplings
22 Special Project Development – Lilly Endowment

Registration requests for the twelve proposed Mini-U courses totaled 80. The total of eligible DSA staff changed from 76 to 73 for the winter semester. Enrollees in courses eventually offered totaled 63 or an increase of 13 over the fall semester. Seventeen graduate students were included in that figure. Twelve regular full-time staff professionals enrolled in two courses. Division staff involved in either teaching or taking Mini-U courses numbered 41.

*Evaluating the Mini-U*

Feedbacks from participants on how their Mini-U course met the major objectives of skills training, professional information, and colleague interaction will again be sought. A general evaluation of the Mini-U PSD format will also be conducted. Questions like these will be asked: Do you think the Mini-U should be continued for the 1975-76 academic year? What revisions or modifications of the Mini-U would you suggest? What other in-service training vehicle would you propose to replace the Mini-U? The responses to these and similar questions will determine the continuation of the Mini-U at Eastern Michigan University. The projection by the director is that the Mini-U will receive substantial staff endorsement as a valuable PSD format. A favorable response to the Mini-U will also support the need for a staff development specialist with primary responsibility for directing division-wide in-service efforts.

*Commentary*

One thing remains clear – until in-service programming becomes a fully legitimate and creditable function, based on successful experience, the on-campus professional development of student personnel workers will continue to be largely a makeshift one. It is the belief of the director that PSD activities must be integrated into the regular ongoing job function of staff professionals. Also important is that an individual be designated to conduct division-wide in-service education and he held accountable for this activity.

It is our hope that Eastern Michigan University's novel format, the Mini-U, will be cited as a promising on-campus continuing education model. The adaptation of various facets of this PSD format to other campuses is realistic, but the idiosyncratic and indigenous qualities of each institution and staff must be kept in focus. We hope that this description of our in-service format will provide an incentive and encouragement to other divisions of student affairs to implement or strengthen their on-campus professional staff development programming.

*March, 1975*

---

**References**


Beeler, K.D. "Some Helpful Things to Know about the Mini-U." Unpublished paper, Eastern Michigan University, September, 1974, 4 pages, (mimeod).

Gross, R.A. "A Study of In-Service Education Programs for Student Personnel Workers in Selected Colleges and Universities in the United States." Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Michigan State University, 1963.

Meyerson, E. "Mini-University Provides Staff Training, for a Big University." *College and University Business,* 56, No. 2, (February, 1974), pp. 31-33.

_____. "Meeting the Challenge: Staff Development for Student Affairs." *Improving Mental Health on Western Campuses Newsletter,* Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education, (February, 1975), pp. 1-2.

Miller, T.K. "Staff Development Activities in Student Affairs Programs." *Journal of College Student Personnel,* (forthcoming, 1975).

The National Task Force on the Continuing Education Unit. *The Continuing Education Unit – Criteria and Guidelines.* Washington, D.C.: National University Extension Association, 1974, 31 pages.

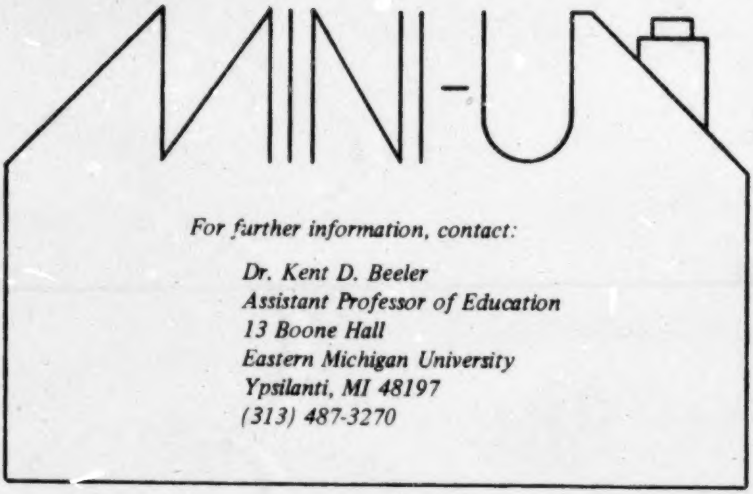
Passons, W.R. "In-Service Training for Student Personnel Staff: A Pilot Project." *Journal of NAWDC,* 33, No. 1, (Fall, 1969), pp. 34-38.

Stamatakos, L.C., and Oliaro, P.M. "In-Service Education: A Function of Student Personnel." 9, No. 4, (April, 1972), pp. 269-273.

Truitt, J.W., and Gross, R.A. "In-Service Education for College Student Personnel." *NASPA Bulletin,* No. 1, June, 1966, pp. 1-21.



Art Work – Bill Beckley, Information Services  Composition – Deborah Moore  Printing – Bob Benden, University Printing Services




*For further information, contact:*

*Dr. Kent D. Beeler*
*Assistant Professor of Education*
*13 Boone Hall*
*Eastern Michigan University*
*Ypsilanti, MI 48197*
*(313) 487-3270*

Division of Student Affairs
Professional Staff Development Committee

Don Boyd
Carol Burke-Fonte
Pam Conrad
Kathy Eiler
George Linn
Tom Otts
Kent D. Beeler, Director
John G. Vandenburg, Chairman

James B. Campbell, Vice-President for Student Affairs (on administrative leave)

Ralph F. Gilden, Acting Vice-President for Student Affairs

LD 010 026